# A FRAME FOR MOUNTING TO A PREMOUNTED MIRROR

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention pertains to frames and, more particularly, to framing a premounted mirror.

It is prior art to frame a premounted mirror without unmounting the mirror, such as by cutting pieces from chair rail molding or ceiling molding, mitering the ends of the pieces, and then gluing the pieces to the margin of the mirror one at a time / piece by piece, and respectively end to end. The pieces are finished by painting or staining them.

This prior art technique has not been widely adopted because it has numerous shortcomings. Accordingly, there is a need in the art for improvements relating to the framing of premounted mirrors.

## BRIEF SUMMARY OF SOME ASPECTS OF THE INVENTION

One aspect of the present invention is the provision of a frame that is for being mounted to (e.g., being adhered to) the front surface of a previously mounted mirror. Preferably the mirror has been previously mounted to a supporting structure by fasteners located at the margin of the mirror. In accordance with this aspect, recesses extend into the frame from its rear surface, and the recesses are for receiving protruding portions of the fasteners, so that at least a substantial portion of the rear surface of the frame is substantially flush with the front surface of the mirror. As a result, the frame advantageously functions as a decorative accent that at least substantially hides the margin of the mirror and the fasteners, and the frame surmounts the physical barrier posed by the protruding portions of the fasteners.

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, the frame is advantageously distinguished from prior frames that have rabbets at their innermost periphery. That is, the frame of the present invention preferably does not have a rabbet at its innermost periphery. As a result, and advantageously, preferably neither the recesses nor the fasteners will be seen via a reflection in the mirror while the frame is mounted to the mirror.

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, guide structure(s) are temporarily mounted to the front surface of the mirror to at least partially facilitate the mounting of the frame to the mirror. For example, prior to mounting the frame to the mirror, and preferably prior to removing any protective backing from adhesive strips attached to the rear surface of the frame, the frame is held up to the mirror in a predetermined position. The predetermined position is characterized by the protruding portions of the fasteners being respectively received by the recesses, and the frame otherwise being oriented as desired. While the frame is in the predetermined position with the protective backing of the frame's adhesive strips engaged to the front surface of the mirror, the guide structures are mounted at predetermined locations so that they can be used in the process of returning the frame to the predetermined position for mounting.

After the guide structures are mounted at their predetermined locations, the frame is removed from the mirror and the guide structures. Then, the protective backing is removed from the adhesive strips attached to the rear surface of the frame. The frame is mounted by first using the guide structures to position the frame in front of the predetermined position, such that the guide structures are suspending the frame in front of the mirror. Then, while the frame is suspended by the guide structures, the frame is pushed toward the mirror so that the frame slides along the guide structures. As a result, the adhesive strips eventually engage the front surface of the mirror and become adhered thereto, so that the frame is mounted to the front surface of the mirror. The guide structures advantageously assist in efficiently obtaining an optimal mounting of the frame to the mirror. The guide structures are removed from the mirror after the frame is mounted.

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, the frame does not interact with fasteners that are for fastening the mirror to a wall, or the like. This may be the case, for example, when the rear surface of the mirror is adhered to the wall with epoxy.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Having described some aspects of the invention in general terms, reference will now be made to the accompanying drawings, which are not necessarily drawn to scale, and wherein:

Figure 1 is a partially schematic, front elevational view of a mirror fastened to a portion of a wall, in accordance with the prior art;

Figure 2 is a partially schematic, front elevational view of a frame mounted to the front surface of the mirror of Figure 1, in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a partially schematic, cross-sectional, partial view that is at least partially illustrative of cross-sections taken along each of lines 3-3 of Figure 2;

Figure 4 is an isolated, partially schematic, rear elevational view of the frame of Figure 2;

Figure 5 is a schematic, side elevational, partial view which illustrates aspects of installing the frame to the mirror using guide structures, in accordance with the exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 6 is a schematic, isolated, front pictorial view of a representative guide structure, in accordance with the exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 7 is a schematic, front pictorial view of another representative guide structure, in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 8 is a partial, schematic, cross-sectional view which generally corresponds to the view of Figure 3, except that a ridge of the illustrated sidepiece of the frame has been removed to accommodate for an obstruction, in accordance with the exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 9 is an isolated cross-sectional view of a sidepiece of a frame, with the cross-section taken perpendicular to the length of the sidepiece, in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 10 schematically illustrates aspects of installing the frame to the mirror using alternative guide structures, and Figure 10 is a schematic front view illustrating the frame exploded away from the mirror, with the alternative guide structures attached to the frame, in accordance with an alternative embodiment of the present invention; and

Figure 11 is like Figure 10, except that torn halves of the alternative guide structures are respectively attached to the frame and the mirror, in accordance with the alternative embodiment of the present invention.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention now will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which some, but not all embodiments of the invention are shown. Indeed, the invention may be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will satisfy applicable legal requirements. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout.

Figure 1 is a partially schematic, front elevational view of a mirror **20** fastened to a portion of a wall **22** of a building, or the like, by fasteners **24**. The fasteners **24** extend around the edge of the mirror **20** and engage marginal portions of the broad front surface **26** of the mirror. The mirror **20** includes a broad rear surface which is opposite from the front surface **26** and is in opposing face-to-face relation with the wall **22**.

Figure 2 is a partially schematic, front elevational view of a frame **28** mounted to the margin of the front surface **26** of the mirror **20**, in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention. The frame **28** defines a central opening **30** through which the front surface **26** of the mirror **20** can be viewed. The frame **28** preferably covers the entire margin of the mirror **20** as well as the fasteners **24** (Figure 1), such that they are at least substantially hidden from view. As illustrated in Figure 2, the frame **28** includes four sidepieces **32** that are respectively joined to one another end to end, at miter joints **34**, as will be discussed in greater detail below.

Figure 3 is illustrative of cross-sections taken along each of the lines 3-3 of Figure 2, except that the cross-sections through the upright sidepieces **32** would not include the fasteners **24** since they are not present at the mirror's upright edges **40** in Figure 1. The rear surface **36** of the frame **28** is adhered to the margin of the front surface **26** of the mirror **30** by fastening strips **38**. The fastening strips **38** can be pressure-sensitive, double-sided tape (preferably a type that provides a permanent attachment), Velcro brand

hook and loop fasteners, or the like. The fastening strips **38** can be replaced by other fastening devices which provide the desired function.

As best understood with reference to Figures 1-3, each of the mirror **20** and the frame **28** define an overall height and width, and in accordance with the exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the overall height and width of the frame are respectively at least as large as the overall height and width of the mirror. In accordance with one example, the overall height and width of the frame **28** are respectively greater than the overall height and width of the mirror **20**, such as by about 1/2 inch or a little more. In accordance with the exemplary embodiment, the outermost edge **40** (Figures 1 and 3) of the mirror is closer to the outermost periphery **42** (Figures 2 and 3) of the frame **28** than to the innermost periphery **44** (Figures 2 and 3) of the frame. Alternatively, and depending on how much open space is available around the periphery of the mirror **20**, the outermost edge **40** of the mirror can be closer to the innermost periphery **44** of the frame **28** than to the outermost periphery **42** of the frame.

As best understood with reference to Figure 3, each of the fasteners **24** can include a protruding portion extending forward of the front surface **26** of the mirror **20**. The rear of the frame **28** defines recesses **46** (also see Figure 4) that respectively receive the protruding portions of the fasteners **24**, so that at least a substantial portion the rear surface **36** of the frame is substantially flush with the front surface **26** of the mirror **20**. That is, and advantageously, the recesses **46** respectively receive the protruding portions of the fasteners **24** so that they do not have a negative impact on adhering the frame **28** to the mirror **20**. As illustrated in Figures 3 and 4, the recesses **46** are preferably between and distant from the outermost and innermost peripheries **42**, **44** of the frame **28**, so as to optimally hide the fasteners **24**.

The frame **28** of the exemplary embodiment is preferably distinguished from one type of prior framed mirror because, for example, the frame **28** preferably does not include a rabbet that is in receipt of the outer peripheral edge **40** of the mirror **20**. More specifically, the rear surface **36** of the frame **28** and the innermost periphery **44** of the frame intersect at an inner circumferential edge **48** of the frame, and the inner circumferential edge **48** and the rear surface **36** of the frame are substantially within a common plane. In addition, it is preferred for the recesses **46** to be distant from the inner

circumferential edge **48**. As a result, the rear surface **36** of the frame **28** has an inner marginal portion that is adjacent the inner circumferential edge **48**, and the recesses **46** will not be seen via a reflection in the mirror **20** while the frame **28** is mounted to the mirror.

In accordance with the exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the inner marginal portion of the rear surface **36** of the frame **28** is painted black or covered with fastening strips **38** that are black, or the like. This mutes any reflection of the rear surface **36** of the frame **28**, or associated structures, that is seen via a reflection in the mirror **20** while the frame is mounted to the mirror. Alternatively, the entire rear surface **36** of the frame **28** can be painted black, or the like. In accordance with one example, it is preferred for the inner marginal portion of the rear surface **36** of the frame **28** not to be covered by the fastening strips **38** and to be sufficiently wide so that the fastening strips are not seen when viewing the front surface **26** of the mirror **20** while the frame **28** is mounted to the mirror.

As illustrated with respect to a representative one of the fastening strips **38** in Figure 4, the fastening strips are preferably originally covered with a readily removable protective backing **50**. Only one protective backing **50** is shown in Figure 4, and it is partially peeled back to expose the fastening strip **38** that it covers. The protective backing **50** is removed from each of the fastening strips prior to the final step of mounting the frame **28** to the mirror **20**, as will be discussed in greater detail below. In accordance with an alternative embodiment of the present invention, glue or another type of adhesive, or other fastening means, can be used in place of the fastening strips **38**.

As best understood with reference to Figure 4, each miter joint **34** includes one or more fastening mechanisms for maintaining the joint in a secure fashion. In accordance with the exemplary embodiment, each miter joint **34** is secured by a pair of fasteners which are generally in the form of I-shaped connectors **52** that are respectively received in correspondingly shaped holes routed into the ends of each of the sidepieces **32**. The connectors **52** are preferably pushed in sufficiently far so that they are flush with the rear surface **36** of the frame **28**. The holes that receive the connectors **52** are preferably tapered in a manner such that the ends of the sidepieces **32** are respectively drawn together when the connectors are inserted in their respective holes. As a result, the miter

joints **34** are tight and visually pleasing. The ends of the sidepieces can additionally be glued together to form the miter joints **34**, or be joined by any other suitable methods or devices.

The holes for receiving the connectors **52** can acceptably be formed using a Corner Lock 4000 brand joiner available from the Fletcher-Terry Company of Farmington, Connecticut. Acceptable connectors **52** (e.g., wedges) are also available from the Fletcher-Terry Company. As an alternative, other routers and fasteners (e.g., connectors, wedges, or the like) can be used.

The sidepieces **32** of the frame **28** can be constructed of any type of material used for the sidepieces of conventional picture frames, such as wood, medium density fiberboard, or the like. The front surfaces of the sidepieces **32** can be shaped / formed in the same manners in which front surfaces of the sidepieces of conventional frames are formed. As illustrated in Figure 3, the front surface of the frame **28** can be decorative, and other decorative front surfaces are within the scope of the present invention. The recesses **46**, each of which is preferably uniform along its length, can be formed in the sidepieces **32** using a router or a molding machine, or the like.

Typically the sidepieces **32** will be cut from a stock piece after the recess **46** and any ornamentation have been formed in the stock piece. Each such stock piece in isolation and each of the sidepieces **32** in isolation is an article of manufacture that is believed to be inventive. In accordance with exemplary embodiments of the invention, each of the stock pieces is substantially uniform along its length, and cross-sections perpendicular to the lengths of the stock pieces correspond to cross-sections perpendicular to the lengths of the sidepieces (e.g., sidepieces **32**) of the frames of the present invention.

A method of obtaining and assembling a frame **28** will now be described, in accordance with the exemplary embodiment of the present invention. A customer who desires to mount a frame **28** to a mirror **20** will select a type or style of frame to match the style of the bathroom, bar, or wherever their mirror is installed. The customer will then collect pertinent information that will be conveyed to the supplier of the frame **28**. The pertinent information will typically include a measurement of the height and width of the mirror **20**. The pertinent information may also include an indication as to whether /

where the mirror **20** abuts or is in close proximity to a wall, ceiling or backsplash, or the like. The pertinent information can also include an indication of how the mirror **20** is affixed to the wall **22**, as will be discussed in greater detail below. Then, the customer orders the frame **28** from the supplier, with the order including the pertinent information. Based upon the pertinent information, the supplier of the frame **28** selects and ships the appropriate frame and/or frame components to the customer.

Although the frame **28** could be fully assembled when shipped by the supplier to the customer, it is preferred for the frame to be shipped in a disassembled state. The customer assembles the frame **28** by arranging the sidepieces **32** end to end as illustrated in Figure 4. Then, the connectors **52** are respectively inserted into their holes / receptacles in the sidepieces **32** to form the miter joints **34** and thereby form the frame **28**. The miter joints **34** can additionally be glued, or joined by any other suitable method or device to form the frame **28**. In accordance with some embodiments of the present invention, the ends of the sidepieces **32** are joined at joints other than miter joints to form the frame **28**.

The frame **28** is preferably mounted to the front surface **26** of the mirror **20** after the frame is fully assembled as illustrated in Figure 4. One method for mounting that can be followed, but which is not preferred, consists solely of removing the protective backing **50** from the fastening strips **38** of the assembled frame **28**, and then immediately pushing the fastening strips against the mirror **20**. Following this approach could disadvantageously result in the frame being mispositioned on the mirror. It is preferred for the frame **28** to be positioned properly the first time because it can, in some situations, be difficult to uninstall the frame, such as when the fastening strips **38** provide a substantially permanent attachment.

In accordance with the exemplary embodiment of the present invention, guide structures **54**, which are schematically illustrated by broken lines in Figure 2, are used when mounting the frame **28** to the mirror **20**. Use of the guide structures **54** advantageously seeks to ensure that the frame **28** will not be mispositioned when it is mounted. Figure 5 schematically illustrates aspects of installing the frame **28** using the guide structures **54**, and Figure 6 is a schematic, isolated, front pictorial view of a representative guide structure **54**. As can be best understood while also referring to the

guide structures **54** illustrated in Figure 2, Figure 5 is a side view illustrating a representative guide structure **54** mounted to the mirror **20** and extending through the frame's opening **30**. In Figure 5, a middle portion of the guide structure **54** is hidden from view by one of the sidepieces **32**. The hidden portion of the guide structure **54** is schematically illustrated by broken lines in Figure 5.

A method of installing the fully assembled frame **28** using the guide structures **54** will now be described, in accordance with the exemplary embodiment of the present invention. Prior to mounting the frame **28** to the mirror **20**, and preferably prior to removing any protective backing **50** from the frame's fastening strips **38**, the frame is held up to the mirror in a predetermined position. The predetermined position can be characterized by the protruding portions of the fasteners **24** being respectively received by the recesses **46** and the frame **28** is otherwise being oriented in the manner in which it is desired for it to be permanently mounted to the mirror **20**. For example, Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the frame positioned in an exemplary predetermined position. Any conventional aligning tool, such as a level (e.g., a tool which is for gauging horizontalness and includes a curved and marked tube containing fluid and a bubble), can optionally be used to as part of the process of determining the predetermined position.

While the frame **28** is in the predetermined position with the protective backing **50** of the frame's fastening strips **38** engaged to the front surface **26** of the mirror **20** (the protective backing **50** keeps the frame from becoming adhered to the mirror), the guide structures **54** are mounted at predetermined locations so that they can be used in the process of subsequently returning the frame to the predetermined position. As best understood with reference to Figure 5, each guide structure **54** is preferably mounted in its predetermined location (e.g., to the front surface **26** of the mirror **20**) by a fastening strip **56**. The fastening strip **56** is preferably mounted to the guide structure **54** before the guide structure is mounted to the mirror **20**.

As best understood with reference to Figures 2 and 5, the guide structures **54** are respectively mounted in their predetermined locations by inserting them through the frame's opening **30**. Edges **58** or angles, or the like, of the guide structures **54** are respectively nested tightly with upper inside corners or angles of the frame **28** while the guide structures are mounted at their predetermined locations and the frame is in its

predetermined position. Such nested angles are preferably of the same, or about the same, angular magnitude, such as about 90 degrees, so that they fit together well. While the guide structures **54** are so mounted, it is preferred for the edges **58** to extend at least substantially perpendicular to the mirror **20**, and for the edges **58** to extend for a sufficient distance from the mirror so that the frame **28** can be suspended by and slid along the guide structures, as will be discussed in greater detail below. Referring to the representative guide structure **54** illustrated in Figure 6, the edge **58** acceptably has a length **L1** of about 3 inches, and each of the stabilizing surfaces **60** acceptably has a length **L2** of about 3 inches.

The representative guide structure **54** illustrated in Figure 6 includes front and rear walls **62**, **64** that the edge **58** and stabilizing surfaces **60** extend between. As best understood with reference to Figure 5, the rear surface of the rear wall **64** of the guide structure **54** is adhered to the front surface **26** of the mirror **20** by the fastening strip **56**, which can be pressure-sensitive, double-sided tape (preferably a type that provides a releasable attachment), or the like. The fastening strips **56** can be replaced by other fastening devices which provide the desired function.

Acceptable guide structures **54**, absent the fastening strips **56**, are corrugated, cardboard corner guards. Corner guards have conventionally been used for covering and protecting corners of picture frames and tables. Suitable corner guards are available from Tharco of San Lorenzo, California. Alternatively, Figure 7 is a schematic, front pictorial view of another representative guide structure **54'** that is preferably formed from corrugated cardboard. In accordance with some embodiments of the present invention, the guide structures **54** and **54'** can be formed from flat blanks. That is, flat blanks could respectively be folded to form the guide structures **54** and **54'**. The guide structures **54** and **54'** can be replaced with guide structures in the shape of cubes or other shapes suitable for providing the desired function, and the guide structures are not required to be constructed of corrugated cardboard, although they may be. Guide structures of any type which provide the desired function can be used.

As soon as the guide structures **54** are mounted to the front surface **26** of the mirror **20** in their predetermined locations as described above, the frame **28** is removed from the mirror and the guide structures. Then, the protective backing **50** is removed

from the frame's fastening strips **38**. Thereafter, the guide structures **54** are used to position and mount the frame **28** at the predetermined position. More specifically, the frame **28** is mounted by first using the guide structures **54**, which are already mounted to the mirror **20** in their predetermined locations, to position the frame in front of the predetermined position, such that the frame **28** is suspended by the guide structures as illustrated in Figure 5. Then, while the frame **28** is suspended by the guide structures **54**, the frame is pushed rearward so that it slides along the guide structures and the fastening strips **38** eventually engage the mirror's front surface **26** and become adhered thereto. The frame **28** is pressed firmly against the mirror **20**. This results in the frame **28** being mounted, in its predetermined position, to the mirror **20**. The guide structures **54** and their associated fastening strips **56** are removed from the mirror **20** after the frame **28** is mounted.

As mentioned above, it is preferred for the frame's fastening strips **38** to be pressure-sensitive adhesive tape. It is preferred for these adhesive fastening strips **38** to have a set-up time / delay in permanent adhesion, such as a delay of about one to three seconds. As a result, if the user makes an error in mounting the frame **28**, it can be quickly pulled away from the mirror **20**, and then be mounted again, correctly, without having to replace the fastening strips **38**.

Each of the frame's sidepieces **32** illustrated in Figures 3 and 4 can be characterized as including an elongate ridge **72** extending between its ends. These ridges **72** are at least partially defined by portions of the outermost periphery **42** of the frame **28** and the rear surface **36** of the frame. In this regard, the frame's outermost periphery **42** and the outermost margin of the frame's **28** rear surface **36** intersect at an outer circumferential edge **74** of the frame **28**. The frame's outer circumferential edge **74** is distant from and outward of the recesses **46**, and the frame's outer circumferential edge **74** and the rear surface **36** are substantially within a common plane. As a result, the ridges **72** advantageously help to hide the fasteners **24** from view.

In accordance with the exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the ridge **72** of any sidepiece **32** that is to cover fasteners **24** and is to abut an obstruction, such as a wall, ceiling, backsplash, or the like, is removed to enlarge the associated recess **46** and thereby accommodate the obstruction. For example, Figure 8 is a partial, schematic,

cross-sectional view which generally corresponds to the view of Figure 3, except that the ridge **72** (see Figures 3 and 4 for example) of the illustrated sidepiece **32'** has been removed to accommodate for an obstruction **76**, such as a wall, ceiling, backsplash, or the like, in accordance with the exemplary embodiment of the present invention.

As illustrated in Figure 8, the frame's outermost periphery **42'** and a surface which defines the enlarged recess **46'** intersect at an outer circumferential edge **74'** of the frame, and the outer circumferential edge **74'** is contiguous with the enlarged recess. In accordance with the exemplary embodiment of the present invention, and based on information originally provided by the customer, the frame supplier can remove any ridges **72** prior to shipping the frame to the customer. In addition, the supplier preferably marks the sidepiece(s) without ridges **72** in an effort to aid the customer in installation.

For each of the sidepieces **32**, it is preferred for the recess **46** and ridge **72** to be uniform along the length of the sidepiece, except for any variation resulting from miter cuts at the ends of the sidepiece. Likewise, for each of the modified sidepieces **32'**, it is preferred for the recess **46'** to be uniform along the length of the modified sidepiece, except for any variation resulting from miter cuts at the ends of the modified sidepiece.

Various versions of the frame **28** of the exemplary embodiment include different combinations of sidepieces **32** with and without ridges **72**. For example, a single frame **28** can have one sidepiece **32** without its ridge **72**, with the remaining sidepieces of that same frame having their ridges. Likewise, a single frame **28** can have two sidepieces **32** without their ridges **72**, with the remaining sidepieces of that same frame having their ridges. Similarly, a single frame **28** can have three sidepieces **32** without their ridges **72**, with the remaining sidepieces of that same frame having their ridges, and so on. In addition, all of the sidepieces **32** of the same frame **28** can be similar by either all having, or not having, their ridges **72**. This advantageously enables the frames **28** of the exemplary embodiment to be efficiently modularly used in a wide variety of different situations.

As best understood with reference to Figure 3, and in accordance with one acceptable version, each frame sidepiece **32** has a width **W1** of about 2 and 7/8 inches to about 4 inches, each ridge has a width **W2** of about 1/4 inch, and each recess has a width **W3** of about 1 inch and a depth **D** of about 5/16 inch. In accordance with this version,

preferably the fastening strip **38** begins at about 1/4 inch from the frame's outermost periphery **44** so that it will not be seen in the mirror, and the fastening strip **38** extends almost to the recess **46**. Accordingly, a substantial amount of the width of each sidepiece **32** is available for receiving its fastening strip **38**, so that the fastening strip can have a substantial width and thereby securely mount the frame **28** to the mirror **20**. In accordance with the exemplary embodiment of the present invention, and for each sidepiece, the fastening strip **38** (or the summation of multiple of the fastening strips **38** on the sidepiece) preferably has a width of at least about 1/4 of the width of the sidepiece, more preferably the fastening strip has a width of at least about 1/3 of the width of the sidepiece, and most preferably the fastening strip has a width of at least about 1/2 of the width of the sidepiece.

Referring back to Figure 3, the illustrated fastener **24** includes a bracket **66** with a body adjacent to the edge **40** of the mirror **20**. The bracket **66** also includes a front leg **68** engaging the front surface **26** of the mirror **66**. A nail, bolt, or perhaps more preferably a screw **70**, extends through a hole in the bracket **66** and is securely anchored in the support structure **22**. For example, in some home applications, the screw **70**, or the like, will preferably extend through sheet rock of the support structure **22** and be securely embedded into underlying boards of the support structure. Alternatively, the bracket **66** may additionally include a rear leg that is positioned behind the mirror **20** and through which the screw **70**, or the like, extends. For example see the fastener **24'** of Figure 5.

In situations in which the mirror **20** was originally installed with fasteners that are not positioned to be, or are too large to be, properly received by the recesses **46** or **46'**, suitable fasteners like the fasteners **24** or **24'**, or the like, are installed, and then the original fasteners are removed, prior to installing the frame **28**. The suitable fasteners can be supplied by the supplier of the frame **28**. An example of original fasteners that would need to be replaced include fasteners that resemble the fastener **24** illustrated in Figure 3, but that are too large. Another example is fasteners that each include a screw passing through a hole in the mirror and a too large rosette-like washer positioned between the head of the screw and the mirror. More specifically, a fastener that is too large may protrude forward from the mirror **20** a distance greater than the depth **D** of the recess **46**, and / or exceed the width **W3** of the recess.

In accordance with the exemplary embodiment of the present invention, it is preferred for the frame's fastening strips **38** to be as thin as reasonably possible, so as to minimize any gap between the frame's rear surface **36** and the mirror's front surface **26**, so that the rear surface of the frame is substantially flush with the front surface of the mirror. Alternatively, and referring to Figure 9, any such gap can be minimized by partially positioning each of the fastening strips **38** in a respective recess **78**. Each of the recesses **78** is slightly longer than and slightly wider than the fastening strip **38** that it receives.

Figures 10 and 11 schematically illustrates aspects of installing the frame **28** to the mirror **20** using alternative guide structures **54"**, in accordance with an alternative embodiment of the present invention. More specifically, Figure 10 is schematic front view illustrating the frame **28** exploded away from the mirror **20**, with the alternative guide structures **54"** attached to the frame. Figure 11 is schematic front view illustrating the frame **28** exploded away from the mirror **20**, with portions of the alternative guide structures **54"** respectively attached to the frame and the mirror. In accordance with the alternative embodiment of the present invention, each of the alternative guide structures **54"** is a guide strip that is a piece of colored tape which is releasably adhesive on one side, and is perforated in the middle.

A method of installing a frame **28** will now be described, in accordance with the alternative embodiment of the present invention. First, and while the protective backing **50** remains on the frame's fastening strips **38**, the frame **28** is moved to the predetermined position as schematically illustrated in Figure 10 by the dashed lines. While the frame **28** is in the predetermined position with the protective backing **50** of the fastening strips **38** engaged to the front surface **26** of the mirror **20**, and the guide strips **54"** attached to the frame as illustrated in Figure 10, the free ends of the guide strips **54"** are adhered to the mirror's front surface. Then, the guide strips **54"** are torn in half by removing the frame **28** from the mirror **20**, to provide the configuration illustrated in Figure 11. The tearing is at least partially facilitated by the perforations in the guide strips **54"**. As illustrated in Figure 11, each of the guide strips **54"** has been torn in half, so that there are half strips **54"'** respectively on the frame **28** and mirror **20**.

Thereafter, the protective backing **50** is removed from the frame's fastening strips **38**, and the half strips **54'"** are used to mount the frame **28** to the mirror **20**. That is, the half strips **54'"** are respectively aligned with one another in the manner schematically illustrated in Figure 11 by the dashed lines, while mounting the frame **28** to the mirror **20** in the predetermined position. Then, all of the half strips **54'"** are removed from the mirror **20** and the frame **28**.

In some situations, the frame **28** does not interact with fasteners **24** or **24'**. This may be the case, for example, when the rear surface of the mirror **20** is adhered to the wall **22** with epoxy, or when the mirror is secured to the wall by fasteners which are distant from the margin of the mirror. In situations such as these, the recesses **46**, **46'** can be omitted

The wall **22** can be characterized as a supporting structure, and it is within the scope of the present invention for the wall to be replaced with any other type of supporting structure.

Many modifications and other embodiments of the inventions set forth herein will come to mind to one skilled in the art to which these inventions pertain having the benefit of the teachings presented in the foregoing descriptions and the associated drawings. Therefore, it is to be understood that the inventions are not to be limited to the specific embodiments disclosed and that modifications and other embodiments are intended to be included within the scope of the appended claims. Although specific terms are employed herein, they are used in a generic and descriptive sense only and not for purposes of limitation.